

AUSTRALIA

London isn't the only study abroad option for engineers.

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Before I even started looking at colleges, I knew that one of my desires was to study abroad. Having only been out of the country for about a week and culturally stupid, I was eager to get out of



Australia is an exciting and rewarding English-speaking abroad alternative to London.

the United States and experience other cultures for myself. On my college visit to Notre Dame, I naturally inquired about the possibility of studying abroad for engineers. The advisor assured me that studying abroad was both manageable and encouraged through the London program; however, I was not sure that London was where I wanted to study. Even though most engineers hear a great deal about the London program, most do not hear that there are other choices besides London.

Seeing that I am writing this from Australia, I obviously choose against taking the London track. London never seemed to strike an interest in me, even though I have never heard anyone talk negatively of it. Last year, I was under the impression that London was the only place engineers could study abroad, so I was faced with a bit of a problem. Instead of settling for London, I took the engineering approach: find the problem and solve it.

My problem contained two limiting factors when it came to selecting a study abroad location. First, that whole foreign countries speak foreign languages problem came up pretty quickly. Couple this problem with the fact that I do not speak a foreign language, and it proved to be quite a nuisance. The only feasible way

to solve this problem for me was to limit myself to the English speaking countries; however, this is not the only solution. For those smart-cookies out there who are taking foreign language classes in conjunction with engineering classes, I highly recommend that you use that language to take you abroad.

Now that I had considerably narrowed down the selection of locations, I ran into my second problem, which was the most inconvenient fact that I still had to take engineering classes abroad. Unlike other majors, most engineers do not have much freedom or leeway when it comes to choosing courses. It was here that I was stuck when I happened to come across a sign on the door to Fitzpatrick advertising an info session for all those interested in studying abroad in Australia.

After the first meeting for Australia, I knew exactly where I wanted to study abroad. Goodbye London and Dublin, it was Perth, Australia, that had stolen my heart. Flaunting opportunities such as living intermingled with Australian students and taking classes from an actual Australian university, I was convinced that this was the way I wanted to experience a new culture. Caught up in my delight, I almost forgot about the little fact that the Australian program was set up for civil not electrical engineers.

I went straight to Dr. Clive Neal, the engineering coordinator of the Australia program, and he told me exactly what needed to be done if I was to participate. I simply had to figure out which classes I would have taken at Notre Dame in the fall, and find equivalent classes at the University of Western Australia. I then submitted course outlines to Dr. Neal, and he sent them to the deans to be approved. During this process, especially when one of my requirements got rejected, there were times when I doubted if it would work out. However, Dr. Neal always assured me that there were ways around the problems. With a little bit of effort, I finally found an approved schedule and also found myself going to Australia.

Along with the London program, the Australian program proved to be a feasible study abroad location, I just did not know about it. There are good reasons why the London program gets so much publicity. Its well established, course schedules are already planned out for engineers, and it is the largest study abroad program at Notre Dame. I think it's a great program, but that does not mean everyone is suited for it. If you have any desire to study abroad at a different location, I cannot encourage you enough to pursue it. From experience, I know that this will require some effort and problems will come up for sure, but all these hassles and inconveniences will be well worth the reward.

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